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Women and political participation

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the obligations of all States to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms as stated in the Charter of the United Nations, and guided by the purposes and principles of human rights instruments,

Reaffirming also the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] which states that everyone has the right to take part in the Government of his or her country directly or through freely chosen representatives, and the right of equal access to public service,

Guided by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[2] which affirms human rights and fundamental freedoms and equality for women around the world,

Reaffirming the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[3] and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century",[4]

[1] Resolution 217 A (III).
[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.
[3] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.
[4] Resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.

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Recognizing the important contributions that women have made towards the achievement of representative, transparent and accountable Governments in many countries,

Stressing the critical importance of women's political participation in all contexts, including in times of peace and conflict and in all stages of political transition, concerned that many obstacles still prevent women from participating in political life on equal terms with men, and noting in that regard that situations of political transition provide a unique opportunity to address such obstacles,

Recognizing the essential contributions that women around the world continue to make to the achievement and maintenance of international peace and security and to the full realization of human rights; to the promotion of sustainable development and economic growth; and to the eradication of poverty, hunger and disease,

Reaffirming that the active participation of women, on equal terms with men, at all levels of decision-making is essential to the achievement of equality, sustainable development, peace and democracy,

Highly concerned that women in every part of the world continue to be largely marginalized from the political sphere, often as a result of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and cultural stereotypes, and owing to poverty disproportionately affecting women,

Recognizing the importance of empowering all women through education and training in Government, public policy, economics, civics, information technology and science to ensure that they develop the knowledge and skills needed to make full contributions to society and the political process,

Reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding and the need for Member States and the United Nations system to increase the role of women in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution and the rebuilding of post-conflict societies, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000, 1820 (2008) of 19 June 2008, 1888 (2009) of 30 September 2009, 1889 (2009) of 5 October 2009 and 1960 (2010) of 16 December 2010, and other relevant United Nations resolutions,

Recognizing the central role of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in leading, coordinating and promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women within the United Nations system and worldwide,

Noting with appreciation the establishment by the Human Rights Council of the Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and in Practice,

1. *Reaffirms* its resolution 58/142 of 22 December 2003 on women and political participation and calls upon all States to implement it fully;

2. *Calls upon* all States to eliminate laws, regulations and practices that, in a discriminatory manner, prevent or restrict women's participation in the political process;

3. *Also calls upon* all States, including in situations of political transition, to promote and protect the human rights of women with respect to:

(a) Engaging in political activities;

(b) Taking part in the conduct of public affairs;

(c) Associating freely;

(d) Assembling peacefully;

(e) Expressing their views freely, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, through any media of their choice;

(f) Voting in elections and public referendums and being eligible for election to publicly elected bodies on equal terms with men;

(g) Participating in the formulation of Government policy and the implementation thereof, holding public office, and performing public functions at all levels of Government;

4. *Calls upon* States in situations of political transition to take effective steps to ensure the participation of women on equal terms with men in all phases of political transition, including with respect to decisions on whether to call for change in existing institutions, decisions regarding transitional Governments, the formulation of Government policy and the means of electing new democratic Governments;

5. *Urges* all States to comply fully with their obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women[2] and also urges States that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention to do so;

6. *Invites* States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to review their reservations lodged to the Convention regularly with a view of withdrawing them;

7. *Urges* all States to take, inter alia, the following actions to ensure women's equal participation, and encourages the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations, in accordance with their existing mandates, to enhance their assistance to States in their efforts to:

(a) Review the differential impact of their electoral systems on the political participation of women and their representation in elected bodies and to adjust or reform those systems where appropriate;

(b) Take all appropriate measures to eliminate prejudices that are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women and that constitute a barrier to women's access to and participation in the political sphere, and to adopt inclusive approaches to their political participation;

(c) Strongly encourage political parties to remove all barriers that directly or indirectly discriminate against the participation of women, to develop their capacity to analyse issues from a gender perspective and to adopt policies, as appropriate, to promote the ability of women to participate fully at all levels of decision-making within those political parties;

(d) Promote recognition of the importance of women's participation in the political process at the community, local, national and international levels;

(e) Develop mechanisms and training to encourage women to participate in the electoral process, political activities and other leadership activities, and empower women to assume public responsibilities by developing and providing appropriate tools and skills, in consultation with women;

(f) Implement appropriate measures within governmental bodies and public sector institutions to eliminate direct or indirect barriers to and enhance women's participation in all levels of political decision-making;

(g) Accelerate the implementation of strategies, as appropriate, that promote gender balance in political decision-making;

(h) Improve and broaden women's access to information and communication technology, including e-government tools, in order to enable political participation and promote engagement in broader democratic processes, while also improving the gender responsiveness of these tools and promoting their use by marginalized women;

(i) Investigate allegations of violence, assault or harassment of women elected officials and candidates to political office, create an environment of zero tolerance for such offences and ensure accountability, and take all appropriate steps to prosecute those responsible;

(j) Ensure that measures to reconcile family and professional life apply equally to women and men, bearing in mind that the sharing of family responsibilities between women and men helps to create an enabling environment for women's political participation;

(k) Take proactive measures to address factors preventing or hindering women from participating in politics, such as violence, poverty, lack of access to quality education and health care, cultural stereotypes and the double burden of paid and unpaid work;

(l) Monitor and evaluate progress in the representation of women in decision-making positions;

8. *Encourages* States to implement fully and effectively Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000 and subsequent relevant resolutions, including by systematic attention to, recognition of and support for the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflict and in peacebuilding efforts;

9. *Also encourages* States to appoint women to posts within all levels of their Governments, including bodies responsible for designing constitutional, electoral, political or institutional reforms;

10. *Further encourages* States to commit themselves to establishing the goal of gender balance in governmental bodies and committees, as well as in public administrative entities, and in the judiciary, including, inter alia and as appropriate, setting specific targets and implementing measures to substantially increase the number of women with a view to achieving equal representation of women and men, if necessary through positive action, in all governmental and public administration positions;

11. *Encourages* States and relevant civil society organizations to support programmes that facilitate the participation of women in democratic political activities, including peer support and capacity development for new office holders, and to promote public/private civil society partnerships for women's empowerment;

12. *Invites* States to exchange experience and best practices throughout the United Nations system on women's political participation, including on the participation of women in times of political transition;

13. *Invites* the Human Rights Council Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and in Practice to continue to include in its work a focus on the political participation of women in times of political transition;

14. *Encourages* States to disseminate the present resolution among all relevant institutions, in particular national, regional and local authorities, as well as among political parties;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, including information on the political participation of women in times of political transition, and encourages Governments to cooperate with the Secretary-General by providing precise data on the political participation of women at all levels.